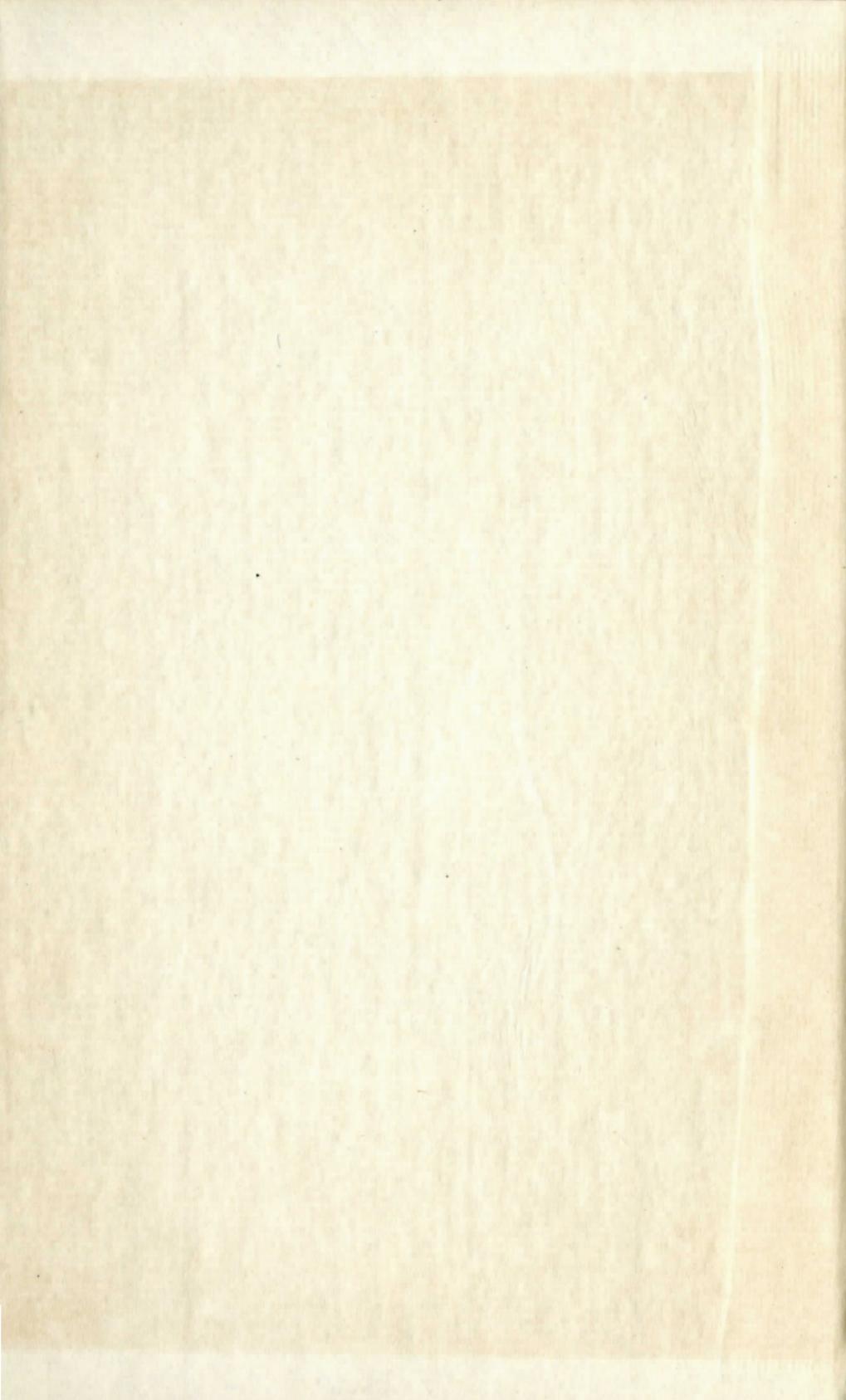
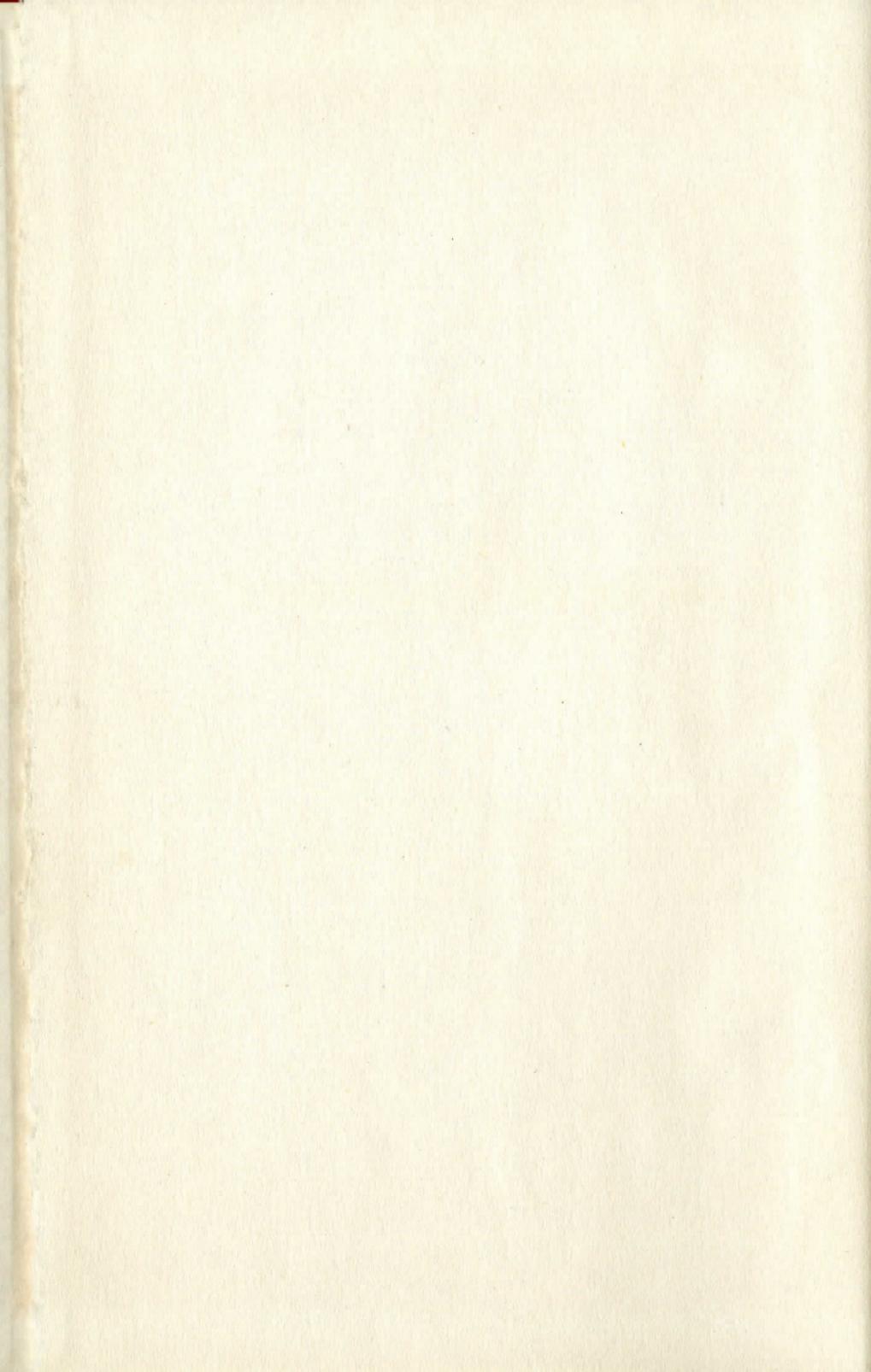




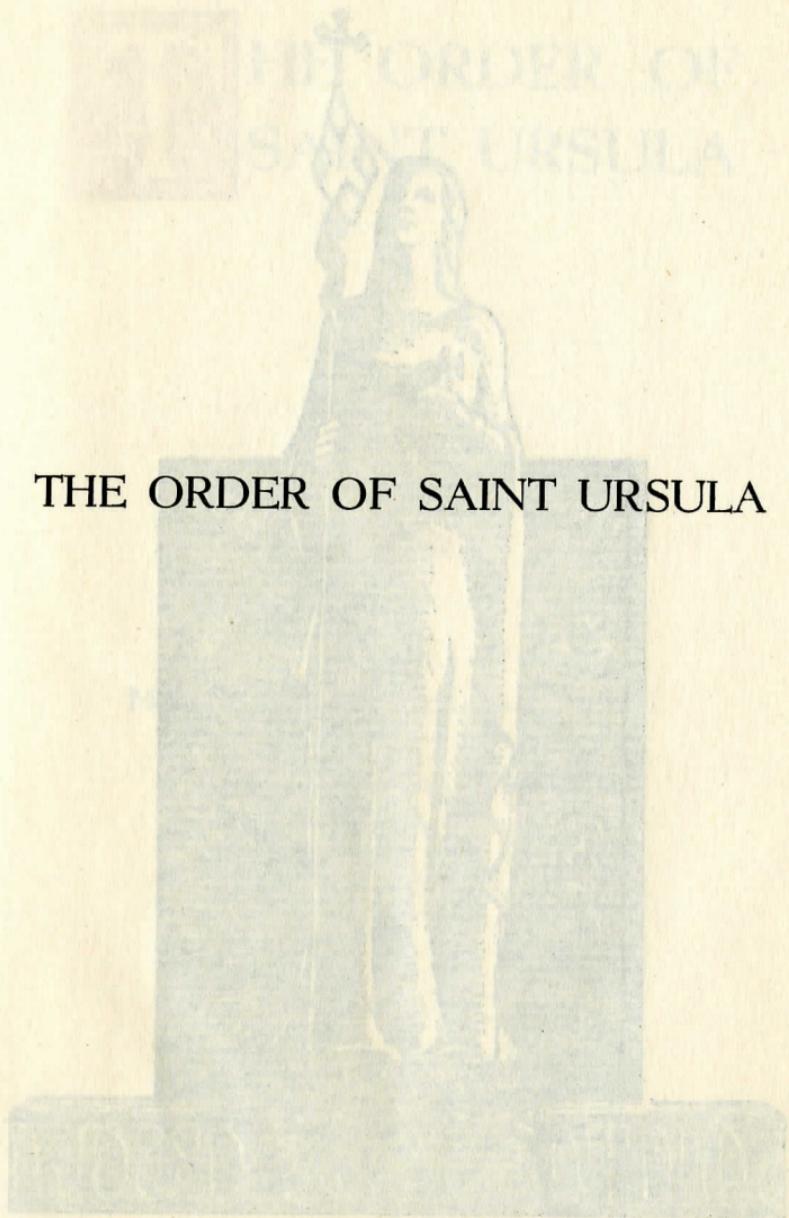
THE ORDER OF
SAINT URSULA







**THE ORDER OF
SAINT URSULA**





SANCTA URSULA



THE ORDER OF SAINT URSULA



MOTHER M. JUSTIN McKIERNAN, O.S.U.

WITH A FRONTISPICE
BY THE AUTHOR

URSULINE PROVINCIALATE
NEW ROCHELLE, NEW YORK

1945

Nihil obstat

ARTHUR J. SCANLAN, S.T.D.

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

✠ FRANCIS J. SPELLMAN, D.D.

Archbishop, New York

New York City

Feast of St. Michael the Archangel

September 29, 1945

To
VERY REVEREND MOTHER
MARIE DE ST. JEAN MARTIN, O.S.U.
PRIORESS GENERAL OF THE URSULINES
OF THE ROMAN UNION
GUARDIAN OF TRADITION
PROMOTER OF PROGRESS
MOTHER OF SOULS

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PROLOGUE

To attempt to sketch the history of the Ursuline Order is to set ourselves the delightful task of making a pilgrimage over the face of Europe—on foot, and slowly, for the story takes us over mountains and into hidden crannies, to high places and low, into the midst of both pageantry and poverty, and even into the depths of souls. It leads us from Desenzano in Lombardy, where St. Angela Merici was born, to Brescia, where she founded the Company of St. Ursula, and to Milan, whither St. Charles Borromeo invited her daughters; thence to France, where Ursuline convents and schools took root and flourished, and whence foundations spread throughout the rest of Europe, and even to the ends of the earth.

It is an inspiring pilgrimage that brings us to pray humbly before the shrines of Ursuline martyrs, or to stand in spirit on the shores of France, watching missionaries set out for the New World; but it is a bewildering journey too, with many crossroads and bypaths. When we travel over all of them down to the present day, we cannot fail to find at the end an ever deepening appreciation and reverence for God's Providence, which works with such delicacy and infinite respect for human liberty, to accomplish Its hidden purposes in the destinies of men.

Just what was God's purpose in regard to St. Angela Merici? What unique work did He choose to have her accomplish in a lifetime spent in the midst of political, social, and religious upheaval? It was an era of great men. Columbus had just discovered America. Leonardo da Vinci and

Michelangelo were Angela's contemporaries. Italy was in the heyday of the Renaissance. Independence of thought was leading to lawlessness of action. Heresy and immorality were rampant. Society needed to be purified and renewed. With divine disregard for the learning of men, God chose "little ones" to accomplish this renewal. To Angela Merici He confided the delicate and responsible task of beginning the re-Christianization of family life by instructing and forming girls and women to intelligent and virtuous living. This was her vocation—and in the means she employed to fulfill her task, the greatness of her soul was revealed to a world that already delighted to honor her as a saint. Enlightened and urged on by the Holy Spirit, she planned and brought into being in the middle of the sixteenth century, a company of virgins living in the midst of their families, and devoting themselves to the education of girls.

We of the twentieth century, who are accustomed to orders of teaching religious, may not at first grasp the full import of St. Angela's achievement; but when we pause to remember that before her day all nuns were cloistered contemplatives, and when we recall the troubled conditions of society at the time, we can realize what confidence in God such an undertaking demanded—such confidence as only saints are wont to show.

To tell the story of her life is comparatively easy; to estimate its influence in the Church and on society is a different matter. After four hundred years, like the proverbial pebble dropped into a pool, it is still stirring new ripples on the surface of the waters.

THE SEED

"Not where I breathe, but where I love, I live."

BLESSED ROBERT SOUTHWELL, S.J.



ANGELA was born in 1474, in a little village of Lombardy, set in the midst of green hills and vineyards that bordered the blue waters of Lake Garda. Of the middle class, she lived her quiet girlhood, distinguished for her serious piety, it is true, but differing in nothing else from the simple country people who were her neighbors. Like her Divine Master, she was called to do a great work, and like Him she prepared for it by a life of retirement. Like Him she formed her disciples with care, and left to them the glory of gathering in the harvest she had sown. Like Him she honored others with her confidence and called them friends, thus winning them to be better men and women for having known her.

This resemblance to her Lord, however, was not to be won without paying the price. In proportion to His predestinate love of her, God tried the heart and soul of Angela, showing her what great things she must suffer for His sake. Driven by His Spirit, she renounced the most legitimate gratifications even in early childhood, and guarded her heart "that it might admit no other lover."¹

Finding her always ready, God purified her still further by taking from her one by one all those dear to her, first

her parents, and then her only sister. She found consolation in the company of a young friend of about her own age who shared her confidences and who, like Angela, aspired to a life of holiness. God took her too, and Angela found herself at twenty-two quite alone in the world, and stripped of all human attachments.

Then came the crisis of her life. Shortly after her friend's death, she went one day with a group of young girls to a spot called the Woods of Brudazzo, probably for a day's outing. Finding a secluded corner, Angela began to pray, begging God to let her know how she must spend her life. The heavens opened before her gaze, and she beheld her young friend in the midst of a company of angels and virgins who ascended and descended a ladder that reached from heaven to earth.

"Angela, know that God has sent you this vision," said her friend, "to show you that before your death you will find at Brescia a society of virgins like unto these. Such is the design of Divine Providence."

The vision faded. God had demanded much from her, but He knew how to console a pure heart, and Angela was filled with joy. From that moment, she never doubted her vocation. She went back to her little home at Desenzano to await further orders, for the vision had not shown her the details of God's plan for her. But God chose to keep her waiting; so she busied herself with His little ones in Desenzano, instructing them in Christian Doctrine and training other young women to do the same.

Months passed. Angela decided to become a Franciscan Tertiary—a step which would make frequent Communion possible for her in days when such a practice was unusual. She began to give away the little that remained of her earthly goods. Her reputation for holiness steadily increased, but God was still silent. If this were a story according to man's fashioning, at this juncture everything would become clear, and Angela would begin her Company. But it is not a human story—it is a divine story, and "as the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts."²

Months lengthened into years, and Angela continued to wait upon God's good pleasure. Meanwhile, she acquired such poverty of spirit as could permit God's bestowing upon her, without danger to her humility, such extraordinary gifts as prophecy, infused knowledge, and penetration into the hidden meanings of Scripture.

In 1516 when she was over forty years of age, an act of charity brought her to Brescia to live. Jerome and Caterina Patengoli, who had a summer home near Desenzano, had just lost their two sons, and begged Angela to visit and console them. Did she think, as she entered Brescia, that now God's hour had struck? Circumstances showed her that she must still wait. The times were unsettled; Italy was overrun with foreign armies and decimated by sickness and famine. She waited and prayed, taught and consoled, and attracted to her manner of life the women and girls who would be her first disciples.

Meanwhile, her gift of infused knowledge became known, and she was consulted by statesmen and theologians alike. Disputants accepted her mediation and were reconciled; princes and prelates sought to have her live in their cities that her presence might bring a blessing. Yet she preferred to live in poverty. When the Canons of St. Afra's Church offered her two little rooms near the church, she accepted them gratefully. They were to be her home until her death.

Twelve years had passed. The time was ripe. Her associates were ready, but Angela delayed, fearing to begin. At last, urged on by a dream in which she saw St. Ursula reprobating her for her delay, she chose twelve companions and drew up a Rule for her Company. They would have almost as much prayer as the contemplative orders, and in addition, would be devoted to the education of children. They would live at home, combating heresy by giving instruction in Christian Doctrine, and opposing by their virginal lives the immorality prevalent in their times. Maidens of all ranks would be accepted, provided they showed signs of a serious vocation. Their dress would be "becoming and simple, such as maidenly modesty demands."³ They would earn their own living, and in time of sickness would help one another, even if they had to beg from the rich. Pious widows would also be encouraged to join the Company, that their motherly vigilance might be a protection to the younger members. Truly, Angela had thought of everything.

Week after week the little group assembled in the rooms near the Church of St. Afra to receive her counsel. One of

her biographers remarked that it was not without the special design of God that Angela chose this place to form her spiritual daughters. To arrive at the sanctuary of their mother, they would have to walk on soil bathed in the blood of martyrs of Jesus Christ, and such an example was needed to inspire the sacrifices exacted of them by a Rule the spirit of which is that of entire immolation of self.⁴

New members came and the undertaking prospered. On November 25, 1535, Angela with her twelve companions and fifteen new aspirants repaired to the Church of St. Afra for Mass and Holy Communion, after which they assembled in their oratory near by, bound themselves by vow to a life of virginity, and promised to be faithful to the Company and the observance of their Rules. It was the feast of St. Catherine of Alexandria, virgin and martyr, famous for her learning. It was to another virgin martyr, St. Ursula, that Angela was to dedicate her Company. The cult of the lovely British princess, patroness of the Sorbonne, was widespread in the Europe of Angela's day. Legends had sprung up about her, poets had sung of her, Memling and Carpaccio had painted her story. But Angela had no need of pictures to envisage her heavenly patroness. More than once she had seen her in vision or dream, urging her to found her Company which would so appropriately bear her name. For Ursula, too, had been the leader of a company of virgins, when Christianity was young in western Europe. With a band of maidens she had left her father's home to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. When their vessels were blown out of their course as far up

the Rhine as Cologne, they were set upon by Huns, and gave up their lives rather than lose their virginity. Because by word and example Ursula had taught her companions how to live and how to die, she was enshrined in men's hearts as a patroness of education—for in the "Dark Ages" before the Renaissance, men were accustomed to think of education in terms of eternal life!

The Company of St. Ursula had come into being. It was a simple beginning, something like the "Come after Me, and I will make you fishers of men," which has reverberated through nineteen centuries of Christianity; or like that scene that had taken place in Paris just a year before, when, at Montmartre, a Spanish soldier named Ignatius Loyola and his group of friends had met at the altar to dedicate themselves to the greater glory of God.

All God's works are inaugurated in simplicity, in littleness, in dependence on His will, in suffering and uncertainty. Angela was now over sixty, and had only five more years of life. It was about forty years since the vision that had marked her destiny. Surely God could have shown her the way to its fulfillment before this! Certainly He could have, but He chose instead to have her amass in the weary years of waiting, a spiritual treasure of fortitude and charity, of trust in Providence and obedience to the Holy Spirit, which has nourished her spiritual daughters for the last four hundred years.

Obedience to the Holy Spirit was her chief characteristic.

He was her Guide, her Love; His least suggestion was her law. His inspiration is manifest in the very tone of her Rule, redolent of love, thanksgiving, and joy. The chapters devoted to prayer and the virtues are a summary of her own interior life. In the very first sentence, she exhorts her daughters to return endless thanksgiving to God for having chosen them to be most truly the chaste spouses of the Son of God. Here two notes of her own spirituality are sounded—consciousness of the dignity and beauty of the life of spouse of Christ, and joy—joy in the Holy Spirit, joy in the thought of God's Providence, joy in the hope of final victory, for "I firmly trust and hope in the Divine Goodness that we shall not only overcome all difficulties and dangers, but that our victory shall be attended with such honor and joy, that our little day of life shall seem to be all consolation. . . . We too shall . . . gloriously enter Heaven, triumphing there to the joy of both Heaven and earth."⁵ No wonder the number of her followers increased so rapidly. How they must have listened enthralled, in the bare little room near St. Afra's, as she preached the Holy Spirit's gospel of love and peace!

Yet hers was no soft doctrine nor one-sided picture. She demanded the most uncompromising detachment, in "obedience grounded in charity," in poverty, "divesting herself of all things and placing all her wealth . . . in God alone," and in a virginity that is "joyous, filled with charity, faith, and trust in God."⁶

Strength to be faithful to so exacting a Rule would be derived from fidelity to the prescriptions regarding prayer,

for, "as by fasting one mortifies one's bodily appetites and senses, even so by prayer one obtains from God the real gift of spiritual life. Wherefore . . . we should apply mind and heart to the task of praying without intermission." Angela imposed on her daughters from the very beginning the daily recitation of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, and gave suggestions in the Rule as to the practice of mental prayer. Their interior life having been nourished and fortified, they were to busy themselves "in some pious work, and particularly in giving Christian education."⁷

We could continue endlessly, poring over the quaint phrases of the Primitive Rule, and delighting in the knowledge of human nature and the respect for the vocation of spouse of Christ shown in every line. It was the utterance of a soul that had lived its days close to God, yet with what gentle sympathy for men! Angela had done her work. At the first General Chapter, in 1537, despite her protests, she was unanimously elected Mother General. One of her first acts was to seek Papal approbation in order that her Company might spread to other countries, but she died before the request was granted.

In sickness she had manifested characteristic calm and decision. Before her death, she called together her daughters to give them her last *Souvenirs*. In them and in her last *Testament*, her energetic spirit lives still. "Persevere, then, faithfully and joyfully in the work you have begun, and beware, I repeat it, beware of growing cold in His service, for every promise I make you will be superabundantly fulfilled.

"And now I am going forth, and you will continue in good works. But first I embrace you and give you all the kiss of peace, begging of God to bless you. *In nomine Patris et Fili et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.*"⁸

Angela was dead. It was January 27, 1540.

* * * * *

In 1544 the Bull of approbation came from Pope Paul III. Shortly afterwards the same Pontiff granted an indulgence to religious women who would wear a black garment with the Augustinian leather cincture. The Ursulines, who had been divided as to whether or not they should assume a distinctive garb, decided to adopt the black habit and leather cincture, which they still retain.

As soon as the Bull of approbation was published, the cities and towns of Lombardy asked for groups of Ursulines. In 1566 a request for twelve Ursulines came from the Cardinal of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo, who had heard much of the work they were doing. By now there were four hundred Ursulines in Brescia alone. They could easily spare twelve! In 1568 they arrived in Milan.

Milan and St. Charles! The great Cardinal Archbishop, the zealous reformer, the indefatigable worker, was also a gentle pastor of souls. It was as such that the Ursulines saw him on his frequent visits to the "House of St. Ursula" which he had put at their disposal. There he loved to come and speak to them of the things of God. As they listened to his exhortations their confidence and veneration for the

saintly prelate grew and deepened. Consequently, when one day he expressed his desire to see them live together in community and take simple vows publicly, they agreed without hesitation, believing it to be God's will. Thenceforth, they no longer went about the city. Their pupils came to them instead.

The first great modification in St. Angela's original plan for her Institute had taken place. The Ursulines of Milan were thereafter known as Congregated Ursulines, and in 1572 a Bull of Pope Gregory XIII authorized the Institute of St. Angela to form congregations, to live in communities, and to adopt this modified form everywhere. In 1580 St. Charles, who had been appointed Apostolic Visitor to the Ursulines, made a journey to Brescia that was momentous in Ursuline history. For in accord with the spirit and decrees of the Council of Trent, he made the Ursulines subject to the immediate jurisdiction of their bishops. The Ursulines of Milan, loyal though they were to the Cardinal, immediately protested. The measure was contrary to the spirit of their holy Mother, who had indicated in her Rule in most decided terms that the Company was to be governed by a central superior, a Mother General. Besides, they would lose their unity. The matter went to Rome, but the Cardinal's wish triumphed. The Ursulines had shown themselves loyal to their Archbishop, but also loyal to their Foundress. Now they proved themselves, as they knew she would wish, loyal and obedient daughters of the Church. They submitted unreservedly.

The holy Archbishop had his reasons for insisting—first of all, the decisions of the Council of Trent. Moreover, he foresaw the probable expansion of the new Institute and the difficulties in maintaining central government for houses widely separated in days when travel and communication were so poor. Three hundred years later, in different times and circumstances, Divine Providence would make use of another bishop, Pope Leo XIII, to bring back by means of the Roman Union, the central government such as St. Angela had planned it. In the meantime, the little Company of Saint Ursula was to take on new perfection, progressing from the state of virgins living in the world to that of religious in community, bound by simple vows, and finally, to the perfection of a religious order, with solemn vows and Papal enclosure. The scene of this new development was France, and the instrument chosen to bring it about was Françoise de Bermond, the first French Ursuline.

FIRST FRUITS

"Of all divine things, the most divine is to cooperate with God in the salvation of souls."

DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE



VIGNON, in the 1580's—the family of Pierre de Bermond, Treasurer of the King in the Generality of Provence, was growing up. Catherine, the oldest, dependable, gentle, and sweet tempered, helped her mother to train the younger children. Pierre, the only son, would become a priest. There were eight girls in all, of whom Françoise, then about eight years old, was by far the most enterprising. It was she who dreamed of converting the Turks—and since Turks were lacking in Avignon, she set out with Pierre one day to sprinkle with holy water every Jew they passed, secretly, of course, while they murmured the words of Baptism after each unsuspecting convert! When their holy purpose was discovered and forbidden, the would-be apostle consoled herself by preaching to the chickens, and rewarding the most attentive pupils with a handful of seed.

She was playing one day with her five-year old sister, on the ruins of a crumbling wall. Françoise realized that it was dangerous, so she prayed to their guardian Angels—and the two climbed to the very top! Naïve faith, indeed, but how intimately a part of their everyday life! The supernatural was a reality to Françoise de Bermond from her earliest

days; she grew up rooted and founded in faith, and in womanhood was described as having "a beautiful intelligence, an energetic will, but, above all, a great heart entirely filled with God."¹ This fine mind and energetic will were to have their training in her typically French home, where austere virtue, logical thinking, and tender love were nourished and developed, each in its proper measure.

Françoise evidently worked as wholeheartedly as she prayed. One day Catherine gave her a lesson in writing, and left her a model to copy. The child determined to master this new art without more ado, and at the end of a week was able to show the fruit of her labors. As she grew older, her parents, recognizing her superior endowments, gave her a thorough education. She learned to read and speak Latin, and had a literary bent that showed itself in creditable poetry.

Her teens showed the many-sided girl in several new phases. Her growing love of solitude drew her to spend hours at a time in a tower of their home, gazing out over the surrounding country. A friend of her mother's, suprising her there, smilingly called her a dreamer.

"A dreamer!" responded Françoise; "St. Paul says that we learn the invisible things of God by looking at His visible creation," and pointing to the snow-capped mountains before them, she exclaimed, "That gives me an idea of the grandeur of God and the steep heights of the road of perfection! That range is my best library."

The young contemplative delighted to spend long hours in

prayer, meditating on the life and passion of Our Lord. Nevertheless, she succumbed for a short time to the attractions of the world. When she was introduced into society, her wit and gaiety won her many admirers, and she was feminine enough to be pleased with her triumphs. She read novels, conversed brilliantly, and dressed luxuriously. The world smiled on her, and for three years she toyed with its trifles, and tried at the same time to keep her intimacy with God. Finally she realized that she could not have both. She was perpetually homesick for God. With all the energy of her resolute nature, she broke with the world, made a vow of virginity, and sought a spiritual director in the person of Father Jean-Baptiste Romillon. It was 1592, and she was twenty.

In that same year Father Romillon and Father César de Bus had begun an association of priests for the teaching of Christian Doctrine, according to a method that Father Romillon had learned from a Jesuit, Father Philip Chanon. Its success was immediate. At that time religious ignorance was widespread in France, and Father Romillon's instructions filled a great need. Consequently, it was not long before he began to wish for a group of women catechists to carry on the work. Providence sent him Françoise de Bermond. There had been a great stir in Avignon when she withdrew from society. Her friends were amused, annoyed, and indignant by turns. But they ended by imitating her example, and some became her future associates.

Father Romillon now had his workers, and the fields lay white for the harvest. But how was he to organize an in-

stitute, such as would be acceptable to the Church, and offer security to its members? Again Providence intervened, this time by means of the young and beautiful Sybille de Mazan, daughter of the Baron of Vaucluse, who, "despite the pressing solicitations of her parents, and the marriage proposals of most of the young gentlemen of the region, resolved to take Jesus Christ as her Spouse."² She therefore made a solemn vow of virginity into the hands of the Bishop of Carpentras, who on that occasion gave her a copy of the Constitutions of the Ursulines of Milan, which he had brought from Italy. Mademoiselle de Mazan showed it to Father Romillon. When he saw this answer to his prayer, he could hardly contain himself for joy and gratitude. "Carrying like another Moses, the Tables of the Law written in his little Book of Rules,"³ he went off to Françoise de Bermond, who received it with enthusiasm. After seeking further advice, they resolved to begin. A house was found at L'Isle-sur-Sorgue, near Avignon. Mademoiselle de Mazan promised to furnish it and pay the rent. In 1594 Françoise, her sister Catherine, and the two d'Olivier sisters opened the house, with Françoise, aged twenty-two, as Superior. For the first time, St. Angela's vision of the Christian education of girls was taking form in France.

The young pioneers were the object of criticism on all sides—until they had proved themselves. Then recruits flocked to them, and new houses were opened one after another throughout all of Provence. In all these foundations, under the wise guidance of Father Romillon, the spirit of poverty was inculcated from the very beginning. Detachment and

contempt of bodily comfort made for austerity and generous devotion to the arduous task of teaching. The life of prayer was intense—it could hardly fail to be, once the flame was lighted from so brightly burning a spirit as Mother de Bermond's! *The Chronicles of the Order* say of her: "Notwithstanding the works of charity, the traveling and the foundations of this great Ursuline, she could say with St. Paul, 'Our conversation is in Heaven.' . . . It would perhaps be difficult to find a person who had more contemplation in the midst of so much action, and so much action in so assiduous a state of contemplation."⁴ How like St. Angela was her first French daughter! Taught by the same Holy Spirit, they both recognized the *unum necessarium*, and learned in continual prayer to give God to souls without abandoning the contemplation that made their labors fruitful.

The almost incredible expansion of the young Institute proved its timeliness in France, where "the wars of irreligion," as Canon Cristiani has called them, had brought education to its lowest ebb. "Schools had either deteriorated or had been closed. Neglected children were roaming the streets and fields. . . ."⁵ The crying need was "to make of these children, of these future mothers . . . women having an interior life, a life of union with God, a spiritual life; women capable of representing with force and authority within the family circle the Christian ideal in its plentitude."⁶ The Ursulines attained their end by teaching Christian doctrine according to Father Chanon's method—giving a simple, clear explanation of dogma, and in addition, a practical course in Christian living, for they taught their children "to turn to God through

love" as soon as they awoke in the morning, and to offer Him a day made up of obedience, diligence, courtesy, reverence, and prayer. They inculcated habits of clear thinking and love of truth. It is easy to understand why profane studies were kept at a minimum. They were not the essentials, but only the accessories—reading, writing, composition, a little "ciphering", some sewing and embroidery. For the rest, Mother de Bermond's aim was "to make disciples of Jesus. . . . The degree of science to which she aspired for her little pupils was the highest degree possible of supernatural faith and charity."⁷

* * * * *

With the turn of the century, the Church in France saw the beginning of a new flowering of sanctity. Within a few years the Visitation Nuns and the French Oratory were established, and Madame Acarie, the Parisian mystic, introduced the Spanish Carmelites into France. It was not possible, in such an era of lively Christianity, that the achievements of Françoise de Bermond should remain unnoticed. When Madame Acarie heard of her, through a friend from Aix-en-Provence, she was deeply interested. This was the solution, she felt sure, of a problem that had been occupying her for some time. She had under her protection a group of young girls who desired to become religious, but who evidently were not called to Carmel. Why not suggest that they be Ursulines? She knew as well as anyone the need of Christian education for the girls of Paris. She sent for Mother de Bermond.

Although Mother de Bermond was a little slow in coming,

for she had gone to Marseilles to establish a house there, Madame Acarie, with that delightful practicality so surprising in the great mystics, lost no time. She convinced her cousin, Madame de Sainte-Beuve, who at the suggestion of Father Marin, S.J., had been looking for just such a noble enterprise in which to invest her wealth for both time and eternity, that this was her opportunity. Madame de Sainte-Beuve agreed to undertake the whole financial burden involved in building a school and convent. Things went on apace, and when Mother de Bermond came, she found convent, school, future Ursulines, and boarders all waiting for her direction.

As superior, she instilled into her young associates her own love of the interior life, and taught them her own methods of teaching Christian Doctrine. Success attended her efforts in Paris as in Provence, and great ladies of the Court frequented her classes. The Queen visited the convent on the Rue St. Jacques and even the Dauphin sometimes attended lessons of Christian Doctrine. One thing only remained to satisfy the dream of Madame de Sainte-Beuve. In 1610 it was realized. A petition was sent to Rome asking that the young community be raised to the rank of a religious order, with Papal enclosure and solemn vows. This was a step easy to understand when we consider the mentality of seventeenth century France. "The cloister was regarded as a finishing stroke, a higher degree of perfection, a guarantee for the future, and a pledge of stability."⁸ It accorded perfectly with the desires of the newly formed Ursulines, eager for the life of prayer, and was favored by the Jesuit Fathers,

who had helped the foundresses at every turn. At the same time, the primitive tradition was preserved, and the spirit of St. Angela lived in her daughters, calling them to devoted action overflowing from the fullness of the contemplative life.

Mother de Bermond had accomplished her task. She helped to draw up the Constitutions of the new Order, and left Paris in 1610, only to begin still another house at Lyons. Meanwhile, the Paris convent flourished. In 1612 the Papal Bull came; to the joy of all concerned, the Ursulines of Paris would henceforth be cloistered nuns.

An Augustinian abbess came to train the novices in the usages of monastic life since, according to a provision of the Papal Bull, they were to adopt the Rule of St. Augustine in addition to their own Constitutions. Father Jacquinot, S.J., gave them a thirty days' retreat, initiating them into Ignatian spirituality, which became part of the Ursuline tradition. Indeed, among the treasures still in constant use in the Order are the retreat and preparatory meditations composed before the first profession in 1614 by Father Charles de la Tour, S.J., chaplain of the Ursulines of the Rue St. Jacques.

It is but natural to find that the sons of St. Ignatius, who had assisted the daughters of St. Angela both spiritually and materially, should also have exerted a marked influence on Ursuline pedagogy. The *Règlemens* of Paris, first printed in 1652 after they had been tried and perfected for a number of years, were the first printed "declaration" of Ursuline educational ideals. In them can be found whole passages that

parallel those of the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* in too striking a manner to admit of any doubt. From the very beginning however, the *Règlement* safeguarded the primitive spirit of St. Angela. The end in view was always the training of future mothers to be a leaven of society. The means employed stressed always the care and development of the individual. The relationship of the religious and their pupils was to be that of mothers with their children. St. Angela had counselled in her *Testament*: "I beg you to try and draw your daughters by love, and lead them with a gentle and kindly hand."⁹ And the *Règlement*: "For the benefit of their pupils they should study to display a conduct full of sweetness and charity, of prudence, discretion and motherly foresight, full of kindness and not too exacting."¹⁰ However, there was to be no tolerating of bad habits or indolence. "The mistresses will pay attention to the posture of the pupils and will see to it that they carry themselves erect."¹¹ "Do not help the children, but let them find things out for themselves."¹² Scribbling, wasting paper or ink were not to be allowed. "No attempt is made to envelop in some artificial enjoyment the mechanical effort necessary for the elementary work, but, by individual teaching and carefully supervised practice, the child is to learn and to take pleasure in learning."¹³

Detailed suggestions were given for the presentation of each subject—reading, writing, arithmetic, needlework, geography, French, Latin and music. Sixteen pages were devoted to the teaching of religion alone, nor was there any lack of practical application of the principles learned in the classrooms. The girls who learned to chant the Little Office

of the Blessed Virgin, and who could read Latin before they could read French, who even attended Divine Office on great feasts, and saw the reverence and dignity with which the ceremonial was attended, could not fail to be at home with the liturgy all their lives. Neither could their exterior deportment fail to take on a gentleness, self-control, and courtesy most becoming to womanhood. It was the natural outcome of living in such an atmosphere of dignified simplicity, in which religion reigned as queen, but where the classics and social graces had their proper places. The simple, austere lives of the first religious, dedicated entirely to seeking God, could not fail to impress all those who came in contact with them. Their pupils were to gain simply by living near them, as well as by the knowledge gleaned from books. "It is in itself an education to live with people who have ideals and interests that one can but dimly guess, and to lose oneself in a fuller, richer, corporate life."¹⁴

The work begun by Mother de Bermond had attained to fruitful maturity. The convent on the Rue St. Jacques founded fifteen others which in turn sent out new off-shoots. They all followed the rules and customs of Paris, shared in its privileges, and were known as "The Congregation of Paris."

The developments at Paris had been regarded with keen interest by all the other Ursuline houses of France. The house at Toulouse, founded in 1604 by Mother Marguerite de Vigier, one of Mother de Bermond's first daughters, was the first to follow the example of Paris and to adopt in 1616, solemn vows and Papal enclosure. In 1619 the convent

of Lyons, founded by Mother de Bermond after she left Paris, did likewise. It was at Lyons that Mother de Bermond pronounced her solemn vows and took the name of Françoise de Jésus-Marie. She died at Saint-Bonet in 1628, having lived to see the Congregation of Lyons establish many thriving convents and schools.

In 1618 the Congregation of Bordeaux, founded in 1606 under the patronage of Cardinal de Sourdis, was raised to the rank of an order. This flourishing Congregation had for its foundress Mother Françoise de Cazères, a woman whose sanctity attracted all who met her. Young women flocked to her in such numbers that in one year, 1618, she was able to open six new houses. Her spirit of enterprise seems to have been inherited by her daughters, for from the Congregation of Bordeaux issued not only a great number of monasteries in France, but, by affiliation with the Ursulines of Liege in 1622, many houses in the Low Countries, Germany and Central Europe, and even a monastery in the Eternal City. When the thriving Congregation of Thildonck in Belgium adopted the Constitutions of Bordeaux in 1832, the family of St. Angela began to spread from Belgium to Holland, to England, and even to far distant Java. From the French monastery of Blois, also of the Congregation of Bordeaux, came the beginnings of the Roman Union and its first Mother General. From that of Tours went forth one who sums up completely in her own person the adventuring spirit of the Congregation of Bordeaux, its universal interests, and its love of prayer. She is its most famous daughter, Venerable Mother Mary of the Incarnation.

NEW BRANCHES

"In spirit I go round the wide world, in search of all the souls redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus."

VENERABLE MOTHER MARY OF THE INCARNATION



In the city of Tours, early in the seventeenth century, the hosts of heaven must have watched with delight, as the fire of divine love and the breath of the Holy Spirit wrought upon the "vessel of election" that was the soul of Mother Mary of the Incarnation. Under their action she was to become as a vessel of gold, resplendent with the jewels of virtue. And when the Divine Craftsman finished His work, He saw that it was good, and fit to carry His love, enshrined as in a monstrance, to souls still ignorant of what it meant to be children of God.

Mother Mary of the Incarnation was both a wife and mother before she became a nun and missionary. In every state of life she was a soul of prayer, whose journeyings in the world of the spirit she described in pages of matchless beauty.

The splendor of the life of this great Ursuline is so dazzling that it tends to blind the superficial observer, so that he fails to see the long, dark shadows that complement the lights. She had a way of being casual about her sufferings that is sometimes deceiving. Yet what heroism is implied in the vow she made to obey all the demands, desires, and

caprices of her associates in all that was not contrary to the law of God! And her "associates" at that time were her sister and brother-in-law, in whose house she was living as little better than a cook and housekeeper, and their numerous domestics and workmen, over whom eventually she was given complete charge. She writes: "I found myself in the thick of the merchant's hubbub, and nevertheless, my spirit was plunged in the Divine Majesty. . . . I used to spend almost the whole day in a stable that served as a warehouse, and sometimes I would be on the wharf at midnight directing the loading or unloading of merchandise. My usual company consisted of porters, carters, and even fifty or sixty horses which it was my business to care for."¹

"The Spirit of God occupied me interiorly," she had said of herself at an earlier period of her life. And with divine jealousy, He drove her from one surrender to another. Her parents arranged her marriage with Claude Martin, and she relinquished her desire for the cloister, and became an obedient and devoted wife. Two years later she lost her young husband and had to straighten out his business and support her son. Shortly afterwards, urged again by the Spirit, she accepted that position in her sister's household which was to be so fruitful in suffering. And always the Spirit rewarded her with ever more wonderful mystical graces, until finally "after many days and many dyings, her long inquietude, her *doux martyre* found its term in . . . mystic marriage with the Word Incarnate."² She was at the

summit of the interior life, although she was not yet thirty years old.

The Spirit of God demanded yet another surrender, that of her most legitimate human affection. She must enter religion, and leave her eleven year old son. Forty years later she wrote to him from Canada: "Know once again that in actually separating from you, I subjected myself to a living death. The Spirit of God was inexorable to the tender love which I felt for you, and gave me no rest. . . . This Divine Spirit was pitiless to my feelings. . . . In parting from you it seemed as if my soul was being wrenched from my body, with intensest pain."³

After providing for her son's future, Marie Martin took the veil in the Ursuline Convent at Tours on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1631, and pronounced her vows in January 1633. There followed a few years of peaceful happiness, yet always she felt that her life at Tours was only a prelude to something God was preparing for her. A dream gave her a clue, and eventually she realized that her consuming love for souls must find its outlet in Canada. In 1639 she left France and her son forever, to go to the life of suffering that she knew awaited her. "I saw endless crosses," she wrote, "interior desolation, and that, abandoned by God and man . . . I was about to enter a life hidden and unknown. His Divine Majesty let me understand that I must now serve Him at my own expense, and give Him a return for all the graces He had bestowed upon my soul. . . . I felt like someone all alone, who was already experiencing that fright-

ful loneliness of soul which I would have to suffer according to the design God had upon me."⁴

Mother Mary of the Incarnation and her companions reached Quebec after a three months' journey. For three years they lived in a two-room house, "through the bark walls of which the stars shone in on the nuns and the frolicsome winds took a pleasure in blowing out their candle."⁵ The Indian children who shared their cabin had habits that were a constant trial to the poor nuns. It was not unusual, for instance, to find shoes simmering in the soup! But nothing could daunt the spirit of the missionaries, the youngest of whom christened their home, "The Louvre."

Eventually a stone convent was built. It burned down eight years later. Sometimes smallpox carried off the pupils, or the food supplies failed. Sufferings of every description were the purchase price they paid for the poor savages whose souls they loved with such consuming love. That their joyous selflessness was not forgotten by the Indians was solemnly attested in a letter written to His Holiness, Pope Pius IX, two hundred years after the death of Mother Mary of the Incarnation. It read:

We, the chiefs and braves of the Huron nation on our knees before your Holiness present to you a precious perfume, the perfume of the virtues of Reverend Mother Mary of the Incarnation. . . . She it was who called us from the depths of our forests to teach us to know and adore the true Master of life. Through her we learned to be meek. . . . Our

mothers have kissed the imprint of her feet. With her hand she marked on our hearts the sign of the Faith and the Faith remained graven on our hearts. . . . Many a moon has passed since that first dawning of the true light upon us. Our nation, then great, is now threatened with complete extinction, but, Holy Father, we beg you to receive with the last wish and the last breath of the Huron Tribe the testimony of its profound gratitude to Reverend Mother Mary of the Incarnation.⁶

The convent was rebuilt after the fire of 1650, in spite of difficulties that would have daunted a lesser soul than Mother Mary of the Incarnation. There were financial worries, sickness, misunderstanding and every imaginable discomfort—and above and beyond them all was that loneliness of soul that God had promised her. For thirty-three years she continued this process of self-spoliation. When she was dying, April 30, 1672, she confessed, "I no longer have anything. I can dispose of nothing; everything has been given, everything is for the savages."⁷

More than fifty years passed after the death of Mary of the Incarnation before another group of missionaries ventured to begin work in the New World, this time in what is now the United States. In 1727 twelve Ursulines from four different French communities came to New Orleans at the request of Reverend Nicholas de Beaubois, Superior of the Jesuits in Louisiana. Among the group who made the difficult five months' voyage on the *Gironde* was a novice, Sister Marie Magdeleine Hachard, who had promised her

father a written account of her adventures. These precious documents, still treasured at New Orleans, show that in any century the spirit of the Catholic missionary is always the same—zeal for God's glory, contempt for bodily comfort, serenity in the face of obstacles, and always a saving sense of humor! The journal begins before the departure from France:

L'Orient, February 22, 1727

" . . . we had hardly made a half a league when we were obliged to alight, our coach being deeply stuck in the mud. . . . We advanced that day only four leagues, almost all on foot. In spite of the fatigue we laughed often. From time to time, there happened little adventures which amused us. We were covered with mud up to our ears. . . . When travelling, my dear father, one laughs at everything. . . .

"Our Reverend Fathers are taking with them a cabinet-maker, a locksmith and several other workmen. As for us, my dear father, be not scandalized at it, for it is the fashion of the country, we are taking a negro to wait on us. We are also taking a very pretty little cat that has wished to be one of our community, supposing apparently, that there are in Louisiana, as in France, mice and rats. . . . They are taking, on board of our vessel, a great number of sheep and five hundred hens. They have no mind, as you see, that we should die of hunger on the way.

"At last, my dear father, has arrived this day, this great day, this much desired day for our departure. The wind has

become favorable, and we have presently been notified that we must embark in an hour. I cannot express to you the joy of all our community. As for mine, it would be unparalleled were it not tempered by the grief which I feel in going away from you and my dear mother. . . . It is only God, whose voice I hear and follow, who could separate me from parents, whose tender love I have a thousand times felt, and whom I now embrace with all my heart."⁸

After their safe arrival in New Orleans, Sister Marie Magdeleine wrote a detailed account of their voyage:

New Orleans, Oct. 27, 1727

" . . . our apartment [on board] . . . was a partition they made for us between decks, of eighteen feet long and seven or eight feet wide. We had . . . six beds on each side, three one above the other so close that we could not sit up on our beds without touching the ceiling. As for me I can assure you that I was often hit, since I was one of those who slept on top, because they had put up there the lightest. . . . Our Reverend Fathers were still worse off than we. They had but a wretched little hole without any opening. . . . They decided to sleep in the poop at the mercy of the rain and wind, their heads in a clothes-basket to receive the rain when it came. . . ." ⁹ After contrary winds most of the time, and several pirate scares, the vessel finally reached the mouth of the Mississippi, and the nuns went the rest of the way in canoes.

" . . . all the fatigues on the *Gironde* were not comparable

to those which we had in this short passage which is only thirty leagues up the river from Belize to New Orleans. . . .

"What renders this passage so fatiguing is that it is necessary to erect every night some sort of cabin and this must be done one hour before sunset, in order to have time to make some pallets and eat supper. For as soon as the sun is set there come mosquitoes. . . . Sometimes, they are so numerous that they could be cut with a knife. . . . Our sailors, to make our pallets, stuck canes in the ground in the form of a cradle around a mattress and shut us up two by two in our cradle in which we lay down without undressing. Then they covered the cradle with a large cloth, so that the mosquitoes . . . could not find any little passage to come to visit us.

"We lay down twice . . . between the mud and the water which fell from the sky in abundance, and which penetrated us as well as our clothes and our mattresses which nearly swam in the water. . . .

"We had another incommodity in the pirogue, [canoe] not being able to sit down, to stand, or kneel, or even to stir. For the pirogue would have upset and we should have served as food for the fish. Our crew of sailors and our chests filled it, and we were obliged to be on top of all that, in a little bunch, and when the pirogue stopped we would change positions. We ate the biscuit and salt meat which we had brought from the *Gironde*, and which the master of the pirogue cooked for us every evening in his little pot. All

these troubles fatigue at the time, but we are well compensated afterwards by the pleasure found in relating to each our little adventures, and we are surprised when we consider the strength and courage which God gives us in these encounters. . . . When we were eight or ten leagues from New Orleans, we began to meet some inhabitants who vied with each other as to who could persuade us to enter their homes. Everywhere we were received with acclamations of joy. . . .

"We have every reason to hope that our establishment will procure the glory of God. . . . If people knew how sweet it is to suffer for Jesus Christ in the hope of winning for Him souls that He has redeemed at the price of His Blood, I do not at all doubt that a great number of holy religious would follow our example. . . ."¹⁰

The missionaries had to wait seven years for the completion of their convent, but it was hardly more than seven months after their arrival that Sister Marie Magdeleine could write, April 24, 1728:

"The inhabitants, seeing that we would not accept any money to teach our day-scholars, are penetrated with gratitude; and they help us with everything they can. . . . During Holy Week, this Rev. Father [de Beaubois] gave a retreat to us and to our boarders. Several ladies of the city repaired here assiduously. There were sometimes as many as two hundred at the exhortations and conferences.

"We have twenty boarders, of whom eight have to-day

made their First Communion; three lady boarders, and three orphans whom we take through charity. We have also seven slave boarders to teach and prepare for Baptism and First Communion. . . . Some boarders of twelve or fifteen years had never been to confession, or even to Mass. Brought up on a plantation . . . without any spiritual help, they had never heard of God. . . . I am always very contented to be in this country and in my vocation, and what redoubles my joy is to see the time of my profession approach. I cannot express to you the joy that I will feel to pronounce my vows in a foreign land in which Christianity is almost unknown."¹¹

On March 15, 1729, Sister Marie Magdeleine Hachard's profession took place. It was the first religious profession within the present limits of the United States. The nuns were living at that time in the two-story frame building which served as a convent until 1734, when their own was finally ready for them. During the years when theirs was the only convent in New Orleans, they cared for the soldiers' hospital, welcomed orphans and slaves, and trained the little French girls, who according to Père le Petit, a missionary in Louisiana, "were in danger of being little better bred than slaves." Like all missionaries, they labored beyond their strength, they saw their numbers reduced by one death after another, and welcomed new arrivals to fill the ranks. In 1810 Mother St. Michel Gensoul came, bringing with her the statue of Our Lady of Prompt Succor, under which title the Mother of God has been confidently invoked in every necessity since then. Through every change of circumstance,

under French, Spanish, and American flags, the work prospered, and like its predecessor at Quebec, the little colony eventually made new foundations, at Galveston in 1847, and at San Antonio four years later.

By that time there was no scarcity of Ursuline missionaries. Irish nuns from Cork were already in Charleston, South Carolina, and some from Sligo had started missions in British Guiana and Barbados. French nuns had begun houses in Brown County, Cleveland, and Cincinnati, Ohio. The community of Landshut, Bavaria, had sent nuns to St. Louis, Missouri. Several years later, another German community, that of Duren, opened a house in Peoria, Illinois, from which the houses in York and Falls City, Nebraska, were founded. But the New World was not the only field of missionary labor. The adventuring spirit of Venerable Mary of the Incarnation lived on in the hearts of her nineteenth-century sisters no matter where they labored. In 1856 Dutch nuns, the first women missionaries to double the Cape of Good Hope, went to Java; in 1862 some French Ursulines restored a mission among the Orthodox Greeks on the Island of Naxos. Others had been working at Bahia in Brazil since 1737. In 1880 the German community of Duderstadt opened a house in Australia and in 1881 Mother Amadeus Dunne from Toledo, Ohio, led the way to the Indian Missions of Montana and later, 1905, even to the snowy wastes of Alaska "in search of all the souls redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus." In 1896 missions in South Africa were begun, in 1922 those of China, and in 1924,

those in Thailand (Siam). Finally, in 1928 there was opened in Russian-Manchukuo, at the request of the Holy See, a school for the children of Russians who have escaped from Siberia. The nuns have adopted the Byzantine Rite, in accordance with the wishes of the Holy Father, and wear the habit common to all women religious in Russia.

Today the Roman Union sends its missionaries to almost every continent and every people—to South Africa, to Thailand, to China and South America. Whether they travel by rickshaw or airplane, by dogsled or ocean liner, the consuming love of Christ and souls drives them joyously on. The gaiety of the novice who journeyed to New Orleans in 1727 finds an echo in the letter of another young missionary, over two centuries later, who wrote from British Guiana in 1945: "We looked out over the ocean and said to each other, 'Just over there is the U.S.A.' Have I been homesick? Indeed yes, but I expected that, and I am learning more and more that without sacrifice, mission life would be robbed of its greatest joy."

THE WINE PRESS

"Nothing remains but to love the Cross dearly; it will bear us onwards, as, with swift prow, it cleaves the waters of eternal life."

JACQUES MARITAIN



At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were three hundred and fifty Ursuline houses in France. Nine thousand religious cared for one hundred thousand children. It seemed as though their work would endure as long as their great gray stone monasteries, built in the manner of the French, to last for eternity! But a veritable earthquake, the French Revolution, was soon to give warning of its approach in the first ominous rumblings of false philosophies and new political theories. It would shake France and those same gray stone monasteries to their very foundations and drench the soil with the blood of martyrs before peace would come again.

When the Revolution broke, the teaching religious were the target of the frenzied mobs for two reasons: their flourishing schools and well kept property tempted the greedy, and their teaching kept alive the Catholic faith in the hearts of children, to be a reproach to their parents, crazed now by the lust for liberty, but haunted by the thought that they, too, were children of the Church they persecuted. An aged Ursuline of Amiens, Mother St. Ignatius, was guillotined at Arras "because she consecrated thirty years of her life to

the education of youth.”¹ She was only one of thirty-five Ursulines convicted of like “crimes” who went to their deaths singing the *Salve Regina* or the *Magnificat*. Twenty-seven of them have been raised to the altars, to be a perpetual reminder to their sisters that “we also should be prepared to die that God may be honored by the salvation of our neighbor.”²

At Orange sixteen Ursulines spent four months in prison in company with thirteen Sacramentines, three Cistercians and one Benedictine. They shared everything, and had all their spiritual exercises together. When the executions began, the religious said the prayers for the dying and renewed their vows. As each group was called to die, the rest recited the *Veni Creator*, and remained in prayer until they heard the fall of the guillotine, after which they sang the *Te Deum*. The executions took place from the ninth to the twenty-sixth of July, 1794. On May 10, 1925, the Church united again in the honors of beatification the thirty-two religious of different orders who had lived and died in such sisterly union. As they shared both their material and spiritual goods in prison, so now they share the title, “The Blessed Religious Martyrs of Orange.”

Only three months after the martyrs of Orange had laid down their lives in mutual charity, the Ursulines of Valenciennes were called upon to give testimony to the truth of their mission as Christian educators. They had suffered for several years before they were imprisoned. In 1789 famine had reduced the poor to such desperate straits that they be-

came lawless and plundered the very charitable institutions that had tried to help them. The following year religious orders were suppressed and religious were informed that they were "free" to leave their monasteries. When they showed no inclination to avail themselves of their new liberty, the civil authorities tried to stir up discontent, sending officers into the monasteries for this purpose.

Although churches were closed, and convents were forbidden to harbor priests for any reason whatever, the teaching religious had not yet been molested, for the Nation did not see how to do without them. But when the nuns refused to regulate their teaching according to the demands of the new National Church, they were denounced and ordered to leave their convents.

The Ursulines sought refuge at Mons in 1792. In the following year, when the Austrians captured Valenciennes, the nuns thought it safe to return; but shortly after, when they had hardly begun the work of reconstruction, the French recaptured the city. Reverend Mother Clotilde assembled her community. "Courage, my daughters," she said. "The moment has come to be strong. Remember that we are spouses of Jesus Christ. The most beautiful characteristic of a spouse is fidelity—and what proof would we have of ours if we had nothing to suffer for Him?"

There was good reason for her fears. On September 1, 1794, the Ursulines were given twenty-four hours to leave their convent. While some sought refuge with their families,

those who remained in the convent were herded into a classroom. Soon they were transferred to a prison, where they suffered every sort of privation; yet they experienced such heavenly consolations amid their sufferings that they could hardly conceal their joy. On the ninth of September, they were divided into two groups, some being sent to the prison of St. Jean, the others being imprisoned in their own convent. By this time the Reign of Terror was over in France, but in Valenciennes the guillotine was just being erected.

"Why be frightened?" remarked Reverend Mother Clotilde to some of her timorous companions. "Either we will be guillotined or we will not—and if we are, it will be a happiness for us, for we shall escape from the miseries of this life."

"What a beautiful ideal for an Ursuline," responded one of her companions, "the palm of St. Ursula and the lily of St. Angela!"

On October fourteenth the two groups of Ursulines, now reunited in prison, gave themselves wholly to preparing for death, aided by the spiritual ministrations of some priests who were also prisoners.

When the first five Ursulines were called before the tribunal, they were sentenced to death for having emigrated to enemy territory (Mons) and there exercised the forbidden function of teaching. They were taken back to prison to await death. Before leaving their companions, the five condemned begged pardon of all for their faults and knelt to

receive the blessing of Reverend Mother Clotilde. Then they were led to the guillotine.

Not even imminent death could rob them of their accustomed liturgical heritage, however, and in prayer and recollection the Ursulines who were still in prison celebrated their last feast of St. Ursula together. The next evening Reverend Mother Clotilde assembled her daughters in the presence of the priests who were to be their companions in martyrdom. "Tomorrow," she reminded them, "we shall be in Paradise."

The morrow came, and once again there was the same futile questioning. "Why question me?" exclaimed Reverend Mother Clotilde. "I know that I must die because I have been faithful to my God, to my King, to the law. But I am not dying for the Republic; I am dying for the Faith and the Roman Catholic religion, which I have taught because it was for that purpose that our Institute was founded!"

Arriving at the scaffold, Reverend Mother Clotilde and her companions showed the true Christian pattern of martyrdom. "We are very much obliged to you," the Superior remarked to the executioner; "this day will be the most beautiful of our lives. We beg God to open your eyes." And as the guillotine performed its task, the chant of the *Te Deum* and of the *Veni Creator* rose from the lips and the hearts of these valiant spouses of Christ.³

Nor has that melody ever been silenced. On the occasion of their beatification, June 13, 1920, Pope Benedict XV, blessing the assembly, said: "May our benediction be a light

and a hope for the religious, who, like the Ursulines of Valenciennes, devote themselves to the Christian education of youth, because the teaching of the Catholic religion always ends in triumph, even when it leads to martyrdom."⁴

Though they were from many different communities, the Ursuline martyrs of the French Revolution as well as their sisters who were imprisoned or deported, exhibited the same characteristics—energy, simple, unaffected courage, a clear perception of the false principles involved in the oaths they refused to take, composure in the face of the most infuriated revolutionary mobs, and a delightful independence.

The Superior of the Ursulines of Lille, when asked to take an oath "to uphold the Constitution," simply observed that she could not take an oath whose object was unknown. "Not knowing the Constitution," she said, "not one of us could examine her conscience before God, to see if she could, without sin, swear to support it."⁵ Sin, in this case, would mean renunciation of the Catholic faith, and she declared, "We will all suffer a thousand deaths rather than renounce our holy religion in so cowardly a manner!"⁶ Then, with an eye to business, she proceeded to remind the municipality of Lille that the Ursuline boarding school increased the circulation of money in the city by the large number of boarders sent there from out of town!

At Nantes, the sisters, who were driven out of their convent and scattered throughout the city, were reduced to the greatest poverty. Mother Angelique Berthelot took refuge at

Brigollière. After the battle of Cholet, she wandered about with the people, hiding where she could, and teaching catechism to the children of the families who sheltered her. She was arrested. Cast into prison as a suspect, she was arraigned before the revolutionary tribunal, condemned to death, and executed on March 2, 1794. "She had a very beautiful deep voice which the people of Nantes delighted to hear every year during Holy Week. . . . They could hear it once again . . . for it is said that she ascended the scaffold steps singing the beautiful Breton hymn:

*Je mets ma confiance,
Vierge, en votre secours . . .*"⁷

The community of Angers was forced to evacuate in 1792. They attempted to resume community life in secret. Some of the youngest of them imprudently wore their religious habits, and were discovered and arrested. One after another they were questioned: "Have you taken the oath?"

"No," answered one, "and I never will take it!" After two months in a prison that was "alive with lice, bugs, and fleas," where, nevertheless, they were happily occupied in singing the praises of God, the nuns were brought out, bound, and led on board a barge to be drowned, it was said, in the Loire. But the barge-man did not wish to lose his cargo of earthenware "in order to drown some women." They were taken off at Nantes, and had to ride in ox carts as far as the prison at Lorient. The convict regime to which they were then subjected was such an improvement on the first prison that it seemed quite endurable. Nevertheless, one

of the nuns who had been ill from the beginning of their journey had suffered too much to recover. She lay exhausted on the floor of a station when some municipal magistrates passed by. They stopped and asked if she wished to take the oath. "Gentlemen, if I had wished to take it, I would not have come this far," she answered.

"If you only knew what is awaiting you!" they taunted her.

"The God for whom I suffer will sustain me!" she replied.

"You are very proud."

"In matters of faith there is no pride!" They were silenced, nor did they refuse her request for pen and paper, that she might write to her mother. When the last representative of the revolutionaries visited her, he asked if she desired anything. "Heaven," was her reply. She died in the convict prison at Lorient. The other religious were eventually released.⁸

For two hundred and fifty years the Ursulines had been living for the apostolate of Catholic education. They had left their beloved cloisters to teach the love of Christ to savages. They had labored in the midst of poverty and privation to spread the Gospel. In other countries, in years still far distant, others would suffer persecution, and be despoiled of their monasteries, but to the Ursuline Martyrs of the French Revolution goes the glory of having been the first to die for the apostolate of teaching.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

"Let us take that which is precious of the past and receive with gratitude from the hand of God the benefits of the progress of the present day."

MOTHER ST. CLAIRE, O.S.U., OF BLOIS

HE nuns who came out of prison after the Revolution had all but martyrdom to endure. Without resources, robbed of their monasteries, dispersed and in hiding, they had lost all that the world counts as gain, but they had won the grace to be faithful, without exception, to their obligations. Now, with indomitable energy, they began the work of reconstruction. The canonization of St. Angela on May 24, 1807, strengthened the spirit of union which had been growing steadily stronger as their mutual misfortunes had given them opportunities of helping one another. Interchange of ideas and even of subjects took place during the period of restoration and by the middle of the century the time had come for the realization of a dream that was already two centuries old. Mother Colombe du St. Esprit Micolon had striven for it in 1618, and Mother Mary of the Incarnation had said that there was only one project for which she could be induced to leave her work among the Indians—the union of all Ursulines. Now, after the lapse of centuries, an actual and lasting union of Ursulines in deed as well as in spirit was about to become an accomplished fact.

St. Angela had promised: "I shall always be in your

midst."¹ The realization of that promise was shown most strikingly in the spirit of concord and of identical objectives exhibited everywhere by the Ursulines. Neither language nor national boundaries limited the exercise of their mutual charity. After the upheaval of the Revolution, the monastery of Clermont-Ferrand had scarcely reopened its doors before it began its ministry of assistance to less fortunate communities. Nuns from Clermont-Ferrand were sent to other houses, while to their monastery came both German and Polish Ursulines to be trained in French.

Writing from the monastery in Berlin in 1856, a religious of Clermont-Ferrand said: "In the different communities to which we went, the practices, customs, and the regulations differ, but everywhere we have found Ursuline hearts. . . . I believe that God is fashioning these souls with care and that He is preparing for His Church the joy of seeing the daughters of Angela merging into the unity of one and the same Rule. Everywhere we found the seed of this desire more or less developed."²

The "seed of this desire" was soon to bear fruit, nourished by a series of events which centered about the monastery of Blois in France. There the chaplain, Canon Richaudeau, who had succeeded in his endeavor to have the celebration of the feast of St. Angela extended to the Universal Church, decided to announce the fact in a circular letter to the Ursulines of France. That was in 1861. Three years later he wrote to all the Ursulines of the world and received such enthusiastic responses that by 1876 the circular letters had become trien-

nials which, from Blois as a center, served as an organ of communication among all Ursulines. It was through this channel that in 1891 the plight of the monastery of Rome was made known to the whole Order.

The only Ursuline foundation in the Eternal City had known prosperity and the favor of princes. Now it was to know persecution and poverty. It had been established in 1688 by Ursulines of Mons under the patronage of Countess Martinozzi, the mother of the Queen of England, and had had a colorful history. The Princess Marie Clementine Sobieska boarded there before her marriage to James, the Young Pretender to the throne of England. Princess Marie Louise de Bourbon, niece of Marie Antoinette, pronounced her solemn vows there, and died there in 1841, after she had served the Order in the role of Postulator of the Cause of St. Angela.

In 1870 the Papal States were invaded. Church property was confiscated and religious orders were forbidden to take novices. Soon the Ursulines of Rome were desperate. Through Canon Richaudeau, who had visited them in 1867, they appealed to the monastery of Blois, at that time in the full flower of a second spring under the guidance of Reverend Mother St. Claire. She responded immediately by sending financial help to the Roman community, and by receiving Italian novices at Blois. After her death in 1880, Reverend Mother St. Aurelia and her assistant, Mother St. Julien, continued to assist Rome. The register at Blois shows that Italian novices were professed there from 1875-1894. In 1891

the circular letter that went out from Blois carried a touching appeal for the monastery in Rome. It concluded: "It must not be said that after having erected in St. Peter's in Rome the statue of its holy Foundress, the Order of Ursulines would allow to perish the only house which represents it in the city of the Popes, close to the tombs of the holy Apostles!"³

There was a prompt response to this letter, and by 1896 a substantial sum had been collected for the support of the Roman monastery. In the meantime, the nuns at Rome had become so few in number that they were in danger of being sent to the *Sepolte vive*, the remnants of the Italian Religious Orders, gathered together by the government in a house where they were gradually dying out. At the request of Cardinal Parocchi, the Superior of Blois assembled her community to decide whether or not they would send nuns to Rome to restore the community. The vote was unanimous. "Go, Mother! God wills it! If we have to share our last piece of bread with our Sisters of Rome we shall do it with a willing heart!"⁴

Three nuns went to share the hardships of the Ursulines of Rome. In 1895 three more went to the monastery of Calvi, in Umbria, which was also threatened with extinction. In the meantime, Mother St. Julien had been elected superior of Blois in 1894. The French nuns living in the Italian communities still depended upon her as their superior and the position of Blois became similar to that of a "Mother-house" for the three communities with the superior of Blois as the

Superior-General. It was soon discovered that this situation was not according to Canon Law. Blois would either have to give up its charitable intervention or ask for a canonical union of the three communities. This latter was done, and Mother St. Julien was elected Superior-General of the little union, on September 13, 1898. His Eminence Cardinal Satolli was named Cardinal Protector.

Then Reverend Mother St. Julien went to Rome to work on the revision of the Constitutions. She had hardly begun when she received a letter from Cardinal Satolli. It read:

The Pope has ordered me to declare to all the Ursulines of the whole world that they would be doing something very pleasing to him if they were to unite under one General Superior, who should be resident in Rome, in a real, effectual and lasting Union.⁵

Reverend Mother St. Julien communicated with all the Ursulines of the world, as the Cardinal had requested, and received so many favorable replies that a General Chapter was convoked in November, 1900. Sixty-three houses voted for incorporation into the Roman Union and on November 28, 1900, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, "the Pope of Union," gave his approbation.

Three centuries before, the daughters of Angela Merici, in filial submission to the Vicar of Christ, had surrendered their centralized government. How fitting that it should be given back by the Pope of Union, receiving its first impulse in an act of charity and coming to fulfillment in filial obedience to the Holy Father!

"Be united, one to another, by the bond of charity, esteeming, helping, and bearing with one another in Jesus Christ,"⁶ St. Angela had pleaded on her death bed. Now her spirit seemed present among the Mothers of the first General Chapter and her consoling promise re-echoed in their hearts. "I tell you, that if you are thus united in heart, you will be as a mighty rock. . . . All the graces you ask of God will be infallibly granted to you, and . . . I shall always be in your midst, lending aid to your prayers."⁷ The delegates, strong in the conviction that they were cooperating in a work that was well-pleasing to God and to their holy mother, St. Angela, proceeded to the work of the Chapter early in December. Their first act was to elect Mother St. Julien Prioreess General. It would have been difficult to find one more fitted to undertake the great work of organization. She was a woman of vision. A sister once said of her, "She had a big heart, big and humble."⁸ She had a big mind, too, with room for universal interests, and with a breadth of vision far in advance of her own times. Her education, given by her own father who, according to his daughter, "exacted that we learn nothing . . . but that we know everything,"⁹ had been almost masculine in character. She knew Latin, Greek, mathematics and law, and could recite the French classics from memory.

As a child of seven, Mother St. Julien (Marie-Genevieve Aubry) first met the Ursulines while her family was living in Quebec. Her father was teaching Roman law at Laval University at the time. Later he accepted an invitation to re-

turn to France, and to teach at the University of Angers, while he continued at the same time the education of his children. When Marie was twenty, she entered the Ursuline novitiate at Blois, where under the direction of Reverend Mother St. Claire she received a spiritual formation as solid and virile as had been her intellectual training. The young novice was given the name St. Julien and was professed in 1871, when Reverend Mother St. Claire was still Superior.

That great religious was quick to appreciate the fine qualities of the young nun, who served as Directress of the Boarding School and Mistress of Novices before she was ten years professed. Two years after the death of Mother St. Claire, the community chose Mother St. Julien, aged thirty-two, as their Superior. From then until 1909, despite her repugnance for such offices, she was always to be burdened with great responsibilities. They were her cross and the means of her sanctification. She served as Superior or assistant Superior until her election as Mother General, first of the Blois-Rome-Calvi Union and then of the Roman Union. Straightforward and generous, with unwavering confidence in God, she dared to undertake great enterprises and to make plans that seemed impossible of realization. Her almost masculine mind and her knowledge of law served her well in her work on the Constitutions, while her fine literary taste and precision of style revealed themselves in her circular letters and in the beauty of the Mass and Office of St. Angela, composed by her. With Reverend Mother St. Julien at its head, the Roman Union prospered and grew.

It was a momentous time in the history of the Ursuline Order. From the treasure house of its traditions, "new things and old" were reverently brought out and woven together to form a unified whole. Nothing was lost; nothing essential was changed. From the constitutions of the different congregations of Ursulines, one was built up, retaining as all the different ones had, the spirit of St. Angela. This was tried over a period of years, revised, and finally approved in 1936.

The pattern of life drawn up in Rome for Ursulines of the twentieth century has much in common with that planned by St. Angela in Brescia for her first daughters. The Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula is governed by a Prioress General, who, with her Council, is elected by the General Chapter for a term of six years. The Institute is divided into twenty-one provinces and vice-provinces, each of which is governed by a provincial or vice-provincial and her council, who are appointed by the General Council for a term of three years. Local prioresses are appointed by the Provincial Council. Ursulines are religious engaged in Christian education, and the formation of the young religious is guided by the two-fold spirit of their vocation. Each province has its own novitiate where, during her postulantship of six months and her two years of novitiate, the candidate for admission into the Order is withdrawn from all secular occupations in order to devote herself exclusively to the development of her interior life. At some time during the course of her novitiate she follows the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius for the long retreat of thirty days. At the end of

the novitiate, the novice pronounces simple vows for three years. Then the choir religious is sent to a House of Studies, where she engages in secular studies, and also receives further formation in the spirit of the Institute and its educational traditions. The co-adjutrix sister is trained in household duties, and is taught to live a life of prayer, performing her humble and hidden work in the spirit of Jesus and Mary at Nazareth. Thus the vocation of Martha and Mary support and replenish one another, for the prayer of the co-adjutrix sister is all-important in the active apostolate of the classroom. At the expiration of the three years of juniorate, both the choir and the co-adjutrix religious pronounce simple perpetual vows.

About ten years after her first profession, the religious who has been engaged in the work of teaching withdraws from active life in order to make a tertianship of six months, a period of spiritual renewal, devoted to prayer and intensive study of the spirit of the Order and its Constitutions. During this time the religious makes a second thirty days' retreat. Again, in keeping with the two-fold character of the Ursuline vocation, this period of spiritual renewal is followed by four months of study in philosophy, dogma, and the liberal arts.

The heritage of prayer bequeathed to her daughters by St. Angela is lovingly cherished in the Roman Union. The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin is chanted daily in choir, and Vespers and Compline of the Roman Breviary are sung on Sundays, as was customary in Paris from its very foundation.

On great feasts the Office of the day is chanted from the Breviary.

As with the life of prayer, so too with the apostolate; the Roman Union goes back to the beginnings of the Institute to seek its inspiration. Educational ideals that date from the seventeenth century are as workable today as they were then, for they are founded on the essential needs of human nature. Drawing upon the traditions of four centuries of experience, the Ursulines of the twentieth century desire, as did St. Angela, to give to the Church and to society future wives and mothers who will be truly Christian women, conscious of their dignity as baptized souls, and bent on cultivating the divine life within them.

What a great and holy undertaking! To elevate oneself to heaven by prayer and to descend again to earth by means of the Christian education of children is to imitate the angels and virgins whom St. Angela saw mounting and descending the ladder of her vision. "It is to practise the charity of the saints in heaven and of the just on earth; it is sharing in the double ministry of the priesthood of Jesus Christ; it is finally to be His spouses publishing His glory and likewise His victims consuming themselves by His love. . . . Let the virgins who follow the Bridegroom make hymns resound to His glory along the way; . . . let them ascend the mountain as Moses did, to speak to God in prayer, but also let them not forget to descend when needed, to teach the law of God to men. . . . This is the spirit of the Order of St. Ursula; this is the perfect vocation of its daughters."¹⁰

ADMINISTRATION

Generalate:—236 Via Nomentana, Rome, Italy

Provinces and Vice-Provinces:

Australia

Austria

Belgium

Brazil

Czech

Dutch East Indies

England

France:

North

West

South

Holland

Hungary

Italy

Jugoslavia

Poland

Slovakia

United States:

Eastern Province

29 Castle Place, New Rochelle, New York

Central Province

399 Sappington Road, Kirkwood 22, Missouri

Vice-Province of the West

1411 Leighton Boulevard, Miles City, Montana

Franco-American Vice-Province

54 Elm Street, Waterville, Maine

Ursuline Missions of the Roman Union:

Among the Indians—

Montana, U.S.A.

Among the Eskimos—

Alaska

Among the Negroes and West

Indians—

British Guiana

Barbados

Among the Negroes—

Brazil, South America

Transvaal, South Africa

Among the Chinese—

Swatow, Chow-Chow-Fu, Hopo

Among the Thai—

Bangkok

Xieng Mai

Among the East Indians and

Javanese—

Java, Dutch East Indies

Among the Russian Orthodox—

Harbin, Manchukuo

(Byzantine Rite)

Among the Greek Orthodox—

Naxos

Tinos

HOUSES OF THE ROMAN UNION

Rouen, Hennebont, Pont St. Esprit, France

New Orleans, Louisiana Havana, Cuba
 Galveston, Texas San Antonio, Texas Dallas, Texas
 Puebla, Mexico

Black Rock, Ireland

(Charleston, South Carolina) { Springfield, Illinois

Boulogne-sur-Mer, France

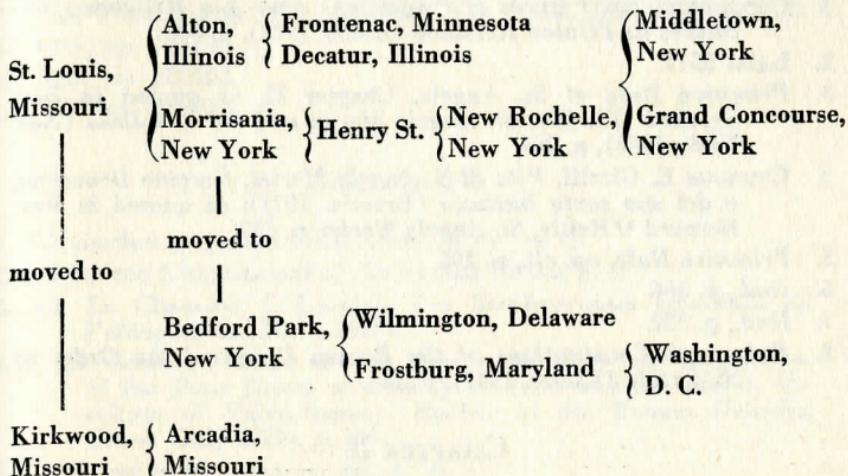
(Cleveland, Ohio)	{	(Toledo, Ohio)	{	Montana Missions	{	Moscow, Idaho Great Falls, Montana
				Alaska Missions		Anaconda, Montana

Three Rivers, Canada

Waterville, Maine { Brunswick, Maine
Maine Lewiston, Maine
 Sanford, Maine

IN THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR ORIGINS

Oedenburg and Landshut, Bavaria



Boulogne-sur-Mer and Beaulieu, France

(Brown County, Ohio)
(Santa Rosa, California)

La Faouët, France

(Saulte-Ste.-Marie, Michigan)

Chatham, Ontario
(Malone, New York)

(Note: Names enclosed in parentheses are those of
communities not in the Roman Union.)

NOTES

CHAPTER I

1. *Cérémonial des Vêtures et Professions pour Les Religieuses Ursulines de l'Union Romaine* (Rome, 1923), p. 30.
2. Isaias 55:9.
3. *Primitive Rule of St. Angela*, Chapter II, as quoted in Rev. Bernard O'Reilly, *St. Angela Merici and the Ursulines* (New York, 1880), p. 299.
4. Countess E. Girelli, *Vita di S. Angela Merici, Vergine Bresciana, e del suo santo istituto* (Brescia, 1871), as quoted in Rev. Bernard O'Reilly, *St. Angela Merici*, p. 147.
5. *Primitive Rule*, *op. cit.*, p. 298.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 322.
8. *Rules and Constitutions of the Roman Union of the Order of St. Ursula* (Exeter, 1937), p. 164.

CHAPTER II

1. Le Chanoine L. Cristiani, *La Merveilleuse Histoire des Premières Ursulines Françaises* (Lyon, 1935), p. 18.
2. M. Bourguignon as quoted in Cristiani, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
4. Cristiani, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
5. Marguerite Aron, *Les Ursulines* (Paris, 1937), p. 41.
6. Cristiani, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
9. *Rules and Constitutions of the Roman Union*, p. 158.
10. Sister M. Monica, *Angela Merici and Her Teaching Idea* (New York, 1927), p. 370.
11. M. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
12. M. O'Leary, *Education with a Tradition* (London, 1936), p. 62.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

CHAPTER III

1. Marie de L'Incarnation, *Écrits Spirituels et Historiques* (Paris, 1929), I, 162.

2. Rev. James Brodrick, S.J., "The Saint Teresa of the New World," *The Month* (January-February 1940), p. 51.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
4. Marie de L'Incarnation, *op. cit.*, II, 348, 349.
5. Brodrick, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
6. *Ibid.*
7. M. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
8. *The Ursulines in New Orleans* (New York, 1925), pp. 182-188.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 219-223.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 228-231.

CHAPTER IV

1. M. Berthet as quoted in M. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
2. *Rules and Constitutions of the Roman Union*, p. 56.
3. Cf. Le Chanoine J. Loridan, *Les Bienheureuses Ursulines de Valenciennes* (Paris, 1920).
4. "The Solemn Perusal of the Decree Affirming the Martyrdom of the Four Sisters of Charity of Arras and the Eleven Ursulines of Valenciennes," *Review of the Roman Ursuline Union* (July 1919), p. 83.
5. L. Detrez in M. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 76.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Cf. M. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-85.

CHAPTER V

1. *Rules and Constitutions of the Roman Union*, p. 179.
2. M. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 231.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *The Roman Union of Ursulines* (London, n.d.), pp. 3-4.
6. *Rules and Constitutions of the Roman Union*, p. 178.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.
8. M. Aron, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
10. *Breviarium Romanum ad usum Monialium Unionis Romanae Sacri Ordinis A Sancta Ursula* (Tournai, 1928), from *Avertissement de l'édition de 1687*, pp. v, vi.

"How well will he serve?" said Mr. Johnson, who had been a
U.S. Senator from Tennessee, during the

last session, as a member of the Senate Committee on Education.

He was born in 1860, at New Haven, Conn., and educated at Yale University, where he graduated in 1882.

He studied law at the University of Michigan, and was admitted to the bar in 1885, and has since practiced in that state.

He is a member of the Michigan State Bar Association, and a member of the Michigan State Bar Association.

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